**Commercial in Confidence**

**REQUEST FOR QUOTATION (RFQ)**

**TITLE OF RFQ*:*** Quotation for the design, development and delivery of a bespoke corporate web site

**ISSUE DATE:** 7 April 2017

**CLOSING DATE FOR QUOTATIONS:** 5 May 2017

**ANTICIPATED PROJECT COMPLETION DATE:** 4 September 2017

**CONTACT POINT:**

The following individual is the University’s primary contact for this RFQ:

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Creative Brief

1. **About the University of Lincoln**

The Communications, Development and Marketing (CDM) department at the University of Lincoln is responsible for creating and delivering the University’s website and digital recruitment platforms (including social media and the broader on-line presence) as part of the institution’s corporate reputation and student recruitment strategy.

The University of Lincoln’s corporate website, as the institution’s shop window, has an enormous part to play in the management of the institution’s reputation and how it is perceived by a wide range of stakeholders. It has a vital role in delivering the University’s marketing and communications objectives, and in its engagement with the outside world.

Though the website is under constant development in relation to the changing needs and priorities of the University, the last full redevelopment was carried out in 2011.

The current website has performed to a high standard and still outperforms most competitor sites. Visitor feedback in terms of the site’s ease of use, attractiveness and content relevance remains consistently very high.

However, it is recognised that the site is showing functional limitations and there are a number of new challenges that need to be addressed to ensure it remains fit-for-purpose and meets the University’s changing strategic objectives.

In addition, technology and ways of using the internet have moved on and certain areas of the website may require redevelopment and new thinking.

1. **About the University of Lincoln**

**2.1 Key messages about the University**

* Top 10 for student experience
* Top 10 for student satisfaction
* Top 10 for teaching quality
  + The University of Lincoln has some of the most satisfied students in the UK, placed in the top 10 for overall student satisfaction in the National Student Survey 2016 [August 2016] with several of our courses ranked number one for their subject areas [based on mean average for Q22 out of 128 league table institutions]. In The Times and Sunday Times Good University Guide 2017, Lincoln rates in the top 10 nationally for both teaching quality and student experience [out of 128 universities].
* Ninety five per cent of our most recent graduates were in work or further study six months after finishing their course, with almost three quarters in graduate level roles [Destinations of Leavers from Higher Education Survey 2014/15, published July 2016].
  + Lincoln graduates secure jobs at major companies and organisations around the world. Recent graduate destinations include the BBC, Rolls-Royce, Siemens, Boots, GlaxoSmithKline, PwC and Rockstar Games.
* Commended for ground-breaking Student as Producer initiative by the Quality Assurance Agency.
* The University of Lincoln is a top 50 UK university [Complete University Guide 2017].
* The University of Lincoln is recognised as setting a blueprint for excellence in teaching and learning through its pioneering approach to working with industry. Unique relationships with companies such as Siemens.
  + Lord Stafford Award
  + Times Higher Education Award.
  + One of only a handful of top universities to hold Global Principal Partner status with Siemens
  + Member of the Santander Universities Global Division.
* The campus is in the heart of the thriving city centre.
  + Everything students need, from bespoke accommodation, to shops, bars and restaurants, is just a short walk from campus.
  + Around £200m has been invested in our award-winning Brayford Pool Campus over the past two decades and a further £130million of investment is underway.
* Research that makes a real difference to society.
  + More than half of Lincoln’s research is rated as world-leading or internationally excellent.
  1. **The Brand Platform**
* Professional and gravitas.
* The University values its students above all things.
* The University has a small close knit community and every student is known and valued within it.
* Safe, friendly and caring.
* Courageous and confident; a risk–taker, ambitious for itself and its students.
* Energised and dynamic.
* Provides opportunities and unleashes potential - it is life-changing.

**2.3 Creative Platform - Tone and Image:**

* Clean.
* White space – fresh and innovative.
* Elegant.
* Formal.
* A serious and world-leading University.
* Gravitas.

**2.4 Copy Platform**

* Short and succinct with impact.
* Gravitas.
* Professional.
* Friendly.
* Focus on academic research and excellence.
* Caring.
* Excellent facilities.
* Top 10 for teaching and student satisfaction.

**2.5 Straplines**

* ***Change your world***
* ***Simply a life-changing education***
* ***Discover your Future***

1. **External Environment**

**3.1 Competitors:**

* **University of Hull #ThisIsMyTime**Homepage – big images with call to action ‘apply now’, no video. Navigation limited and orientated around UG recruitment. Hard to find programme information. Attempt at simplicity has actually resulted in a site that is hard to navigate. CRA compliant but KIS data not showing.
* **University of Nottingham – a world top 1% university**Home page orientated around student recruitment. Significant elements not displaying. Static, centralised and non-responsive. KIS data not showing. Old fashioned design. Imagery poor and lacklustre.
* **Nottingham Trent University: Home**Student recruitment focus on homes page – huge course search. Created from student perspective. Course information easy to find and clean. Straightforward but brochureware approach to information. CRA compliant.
* **Goldsmiths, University of London (HEIST winner)**Similar to US university website design. Big images. Student recruitment focus. Hamburger menu. Multiple clicks to get to course search. Course info text heavy. KIS data not apparent. Video content upfront on course pages. No obvious link to accommodation.
* **University of Gloucestershire (HEIST winner)**Video homepage, lots of messages. Call to action – come to an open day; hard to find course info. Non CRA compliant. Pages drop off to left.
* **DeMontfort University – Leicester, UK (ranked no.1 website according to social media)**Student recruitment orientated. Exciting site with easy to access virtual tour, video, programme info. Strong imagery. Nice but traditional left hand menu. Big investment in video and digital content. Good key messages for each course. Good call to action to guide you through site.

**3.2 Importance of the Website**

* Last year a million new users from more than 100 countries visited the University of Lincoln website and more than one million people engaged with us in some way through social media.
* It is often the first point of contact for potential students and their influencers.
* Key decision makers, such as parents may never go to a HE Fair and their knowledge comes from searching on-line.
* Interaction with social media.
* All students who enrol with us tell us they have looked at our website.
* Digital media means we can communicate much more than static images and brochureware – video, virtual open day, personalised responsive content, site tours.
* Consumer Rights Act – to be CRA compliant, the website underpins all other information channels (advertisements/prospectus/direct mail). It is the safety net for the institution. Current government guidance for universities may be found [here](http://www.hefce.ac.uk/media/HEFCE,2014/Content/Learning,and,teaching/Guide,to,providing,info,to,students/Guide_to_providing_info_to_students.pdf).
* Adds value – it provides information and interactivity to add value to all other channels.
* It gives an honest experience of the University of Lincoln to anyone who visits it.  
  1. **Analysis of Current Site**

Analysis of the University of Lincoln corporate website’s analytics shows the consumption of course information being of primary importance to visitors. This is followed (in order) by campus information, virtual open day (virtual tour), open day information, accommodation, Job Opportunities (inc student jobs) and information about the city.

The most popular search term (on the site) is the internal service “blackboard” and the following top 15 searches are course related.

Top referrers are currently Facebook, Hot Courses International, UCAS and Twitter.

Our audience is made up of 76% UK, 3% US, 2% China 1.5% India. Rest of World are less than 0.5% per country.

**3.4 Substitute Products** – where else can you get this information or experience?

* Prospectus
* Leaflet
* Social media
* School visits
* UCAS recruitment fairs.

1. **What is required?**

The University of Lincoln is inviting quotations to research, design, build, implement (including user testing) and populate a new responsive corporate website for the University of Lincoln.

We require a website that stands out from competitor universities. Therefore, it needs to avoid clichéd messages and imagery. It needs to be exceptional quality as the average undergraduate debt is estimated at £50-£80k (the equivalent of a starter home in Lincoln or a high end car).

We are inviting agencies to quote on the basis of either or both of the following two options:

* New site using current content management system (see appendix for details); or
* A new site with a new CMS

We would like the following features to be realised:

* Personalisation – a site that recognises and responds to visitors
* A responsive site
* Improved search functions
* Excellent tracking
* Good integration with social media
* Live chat
* A site that you want to visit again and again
* Interactive features
* Call to action – come and visit us
* Programme-led.

The University is considering outsourcing the ongoing maintenance and routine development work associated with the new site. We are therefore also inviting agencies to provide an estimate for this work if they wish to do so.

1. **Corporate identity guidelines**

* The University’s corporate identity guidelines can be accessed via <https://www.lincoln.ac.uk/home/abouttheuniversity/press/identity/>
* The logo must be clear and prominent in the advert. Remember ‘recall and recognition‘ are important outcomes.

1. **Primary Audiences**

* Potential students and their key influencers – teachers, parents, careers advisors
* International research community/potential funders and collaborators
* The existing Lincoln community (staff, students and local population)
* Potential staff members
* Media
* General public
* Alumni and donors.

1. **Challenges**

* Competitive environment – more aggressive HE marketing
* Reducing demographics in target market
* UCAS applications down approx. 20% this year across the sector
* Increased substitute products such as apprenticeships or getting a job
* Positioned against Russell Group and established brand
* More worry about going to university – leaving home/costs/making friends
* Parents vital to decision-making
* ROI important to decision-making in terms of career
* Teachers key in decision-making
* Scary world environment – Trump/Brexit – less security for young people.

1. **What our current applicants say about us**

These links provide information about what our current applicants are saying about us and why they are choosing Lincoln:

#DefinitelyLincoln campaign - <https://storify.com/unilincoln/definitelylincoln>

Friends for Life campaign - <https://twitter.com/unilincoln/timelines/686570757770620928>

2017 Applicants’ Facebook page - <https://www.facebook.com/uolapplicants2016/?fref=ts>

1. **Timescales and budget**

Agencies are asked to provide proposals with estimated costs and realistic timeframe through to launch (4 September 2017). **The deadline for proposals is 5 May 2017.**

1. **Contacts**

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Appendix

**Course pages**Undergraduate and Postgraduate courses are presentations of data from the University’s Academic Programme Management System (APMS). Where recruitment cycles overlap, it is necessary to serve multiple course records simultaneously.

**Existing content management system**The content management system currently used for the University of Lincoln’s website is [Terminal Four](https://www.terminalfour.com/) v7.3. All templates and content types are to be set-up and tested by the agency within T4 CMS if this is the option proposed.

The number of T4 templates should be minimised as far as possible with content guiding page layout rather than the template itself.

New responsive inner pages should retain continuity with the home page but be flexible enough to perform multiple functions within the corporate site.

**Other considerations**Current pages that contain additional functionality that require responsive considerations outside of the usual inner page template:

* Open days  
  [Build requirement] Personalisation based on previous booking/registration status
* Press articles (fed by a bespoke back-end service)
* Press archive
* Events pages
* Course searches (Find a Course; Study at Lincoln > Undergraduate Courses; Study at Lincoln > Postgraduate Courses; Study at Lincoln > Short Courses)
* Maps
* Staff lists
* Site search (see below)

**Site search functions**

The University of Lincoln corporate website currently uses Google CSE to provide page search functionality. The top-level search currently excludes lincoln.ac.uk/news pages but includes staff.lincoln.ac.uk pages. /news searches are made via a separate CSE from within the news archive section.

**Not included in the scope of this development**

Several outward-facing web services are not considered within the scope of this development, these include:

* All sub-domain sites (e.g. staff.lincoln.ac.uk, blogs.lincoln.ac.uk, gateway.lincoln.ac.uk, email.lincoln.ac.uk, alumni.lincoln.ac.uk, jobs.lincoln.ac.uk etc.)
* The *Virtual Open Day* (lincoln.ac.uk/vod)
* Web forms (lincoln.ac.uk/\_forms & lincoln.ac.uk/forms)